

PEACE

By Aristophanes

Translated and adapted by Graham Kirby

Characters in the Play

TRYGAEUS, *an Athenian farmer*

SLAVE 1 *of Trygaeus*

SLAVE 2 *of Trygaeus*

FIRST DAUGHTER *of Trygaeus*

SECOND DAUGHTER *of Trygaeus*

HERMES *the messenger god*

WAR *a god*

HAVOC *his servant*

PEACE *a goddess*

GROUP OF VILLAINS, including **VILLAINS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6**

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

CHORUS OF FARMERS

(**SCENE**: - A farm)

SLAVE 1

Yuck!

SLAVE 2

Eugh!

SLAVE 1

By Zeus! It smells!

SLAVE 2

Eugh!

SLAVE 1

But come on. Let's give it to him.

SLAVE 2

There it is. I hope it stinks him to death!

SLAVE 1

Now give him this one.

SLAVE 2

There! Surely he can't have eaten that one already?

SLAVE 1

Yes he has! Gobbled it all up! Come on, hurry up. Let's get him some more...

SLAVE 2

Yuck.

SLAVE 1

Come come, he likes it smelly.

SLAVE 2

Yuck!

SLAVE 1

Stop complaining and mix it for him. (*To the audience*) Can any of you tell me where to get a nose plug? This is disgusting work.

(*To **SLAVE 2***)

Right, one more bucket. Has he done eating? Come on, you stuff yourself 'til you burst! This awful creature! Look at it – wallowing in

its food! Yuck! What disgusting god let this monster loose upon us? I'm getting the beast a drink.

SLAVE 2 *(to the audience)*

And I will explain the matter to you ladies and gentlemen – even to teachers. Our master's gone mad: all day long he looks to heaven and cries to Zeus. "O Zeus!" he shouts, "What are you doing? What is happening to us?" And we have to feed him this -

SLAVE 1

Shh! I think I hear him!

TRYGAEUS *(from within)*

O Zeus! What are you doing? What is happening to us?

SLAVE 2

Crazy! Mad! When his trouble first began, he said to himself, "How could I go straight to Zeus?" So he built a tall ladder and so clambered up towards heaven – but he soon fell off and broke his head. Then yesterday he went out and brought us back this beast, this great *beetle*. But he treats it like a horse, saying, "Oh! My little Pegasus, my noble flying steed! May your wings soon take me to Zeus!"

SLAVE 1

Oi! Look! Look at him! Look at our master!

(TRYGAEUS enters on a beetle)

TRYGAEUS

Easy, beetle. Careful now. Whoa there, Pegasus.

SLAVE 2

Poor master! He's mad.

SLAVE 1

Crazy.

TRYGAEUS

Silence! Silence! Everyone listen!

SLAVE 2

What is he doing?

SLAVE 1

Master! What are you doing?

TRYGAEUS

I am going to visit Zeus!

SLAVES 1 and 2

Why?

TRYGAEUS

I am going to ask him for peace!

SLAVE 2 (*loudly*)

Oh look! Here are his daughters. Tell your father to stop!

FIRST DAUGHTER

Father! Father! What are you doing? Why are you leaving us?

TRYGAEUS

Yes, I am leaving you. I am going to bring us peace!

SECOND DAUGHTER

But how are you going to get there?

TRYGAEUS

By beetle!

FIRST DAUGHTER

Oh daddy! You are silly! You can't get to heaven by beetle.

SECOND DAUGHTER

And you can't get to heaven on such a smelly beetle.

TRYGAEUS

Just watch me! Come on, Pegasus! Off we go!

SLAVE 1

Crazy!

TRYGAEUS

Look at how small everyone is, Pegasus... It's hard to make anyone out, they're so small. Oh, but look, there's Boris Johnson's ego.

TRYGAEUS

And here we are. Heaven! (*Pause*) Hello! Hello there! Where is everyone? Is anyone there?

HERMES

Who are you you? And what is *this*?

TRYGAEUS

This is my flying beetle, Pegasus!

HERMES

Oh, you idiot! How did you get here? Come on, come on! Tell me.

(TRYGAEUS is silent)

HERMES

What country are you from?

(TRYGAEUS is silent)

HERMES

Who is your father?

(TRYGAEUS is silent)

HERMES

By Zeus, you will die, unless you tell me your name.

TRYGAEUS

My name is Trygaeus.

HERMES

And why did you come here?

TRYGAEUS

I'm here to see Zeus!

HERMES

Zeus? Zeus? Well, my friend, you have come a long way for nothing. All the gods moved out yesterday.

TRYGAEUS

What? Where on earth - ?

HERMES

Earth, did you say? Why would they go to Earth? I've heard it's an awful place.

TRYGAEUS

Ok, where are they then?

HERMES

Very far, very far, right at the furthest end of heaven.

TRYGAEUS

But why have they left you here?

HERMES

I am watching what remains of the furniture, the pots and pans, the bits of chairs and tables, and odd wine-jars. It's great fun.

TRYGAEUS

And why have the gods moved out?

HERMES

Well, they have had enough of war. They're fed up with you humans – with your prayers and whinging and constant waging of war – so they left. They've gone.

TRYGAEUS

What? Why?

HERMES

Well, the gods have bent over backwards to get you lot peace and every time you nearly get there, you start another war. They've had enough of it. So they've gone off and left War in charge here.

TRYGAEUS

Well, they do have a point there. We have been starting a lot of wars lately.

HERMES

So I don't know whether you will ever see Peace again.

TRYGAEUS

Where has she gone, then?

HERMES

War has buried her in a deep, deep pit.

TRYGAEUS

Where?

HERMES

Well, you see those heaps of stones? She's behind that lot.

TRYGAEUS

And tell me, what is War planning for us?

HERMES

All I know is that last evening he brought along a huge mortar.

TRYGAEUS

A mortar?

HERMES

Oh yes! He's going to pound you all up. Sorry. But I must dash – here he comes.

(HERMES departs quickly)

TRYGAEUS

Oh, great Gods! Come on Pegasus, let's hide.

(WAR enters, carrying a huge mortar)

WAR

Oh, mortals, mortals! Wretched mortals!

(WAR gives an evil laugh)

TRYGAEUS

Oh Pegasus! What is going to happen to us?

(WAR gives another evil laugh and throws some food into the mortar)

WAR

Oh! All of you humans are going to die. First the French!

(He throws in some garlic)

TRYGAEUS

Well, none of us like the French.

WAR

Now the Americans! Oh, Italy! You too must die!

(WAR throws in some American food and gives an evil laugh)

TRYGAEUS

Oh no! Not us next!

WAR

And next, I'll throw in the... *(He stops)* Oi! Havoc! You come here!
Now!

HAVOC

What do you want, master?

WAR

Come on you! What are you doing there, you lazy idiot?

(WAR hits HAVOC across the head)

HAVOC

Oh master! What are you doing?

WAR

Run and fetch me my pestle.

(HAVOC runs offstage)

TRYGAEUS *(to the audience)*

Ah! What is going to happen? If he returns with that pestle, War will pound us all to pieces.

(HAVOC appears from the wings)

WAR *(to the returning HAVOC)*

Well?

HAVOC

Well what, master?

WAR

You have brought back nothing, idiot!

(WAR hits HAVOC across the head)

HAVOC

I can't find it, master.

WAR

Well, go to America and find one.

HAVOC

Aye aye, master!

(HAVOC runs offstage)

WAR *(shouting after HAVOC)*

And be as quick as you can! I want to destroy these humans!

TRYGAEUS *(to the audience)*

What is going to happen?

HAVOC *(returning, nervously)*

Master?

WAR

Yes?

HAVOC

Master?

WAR

What is it? Again you come back without it?

HAVOC

The Americans have lost their pestle.

WAR

What?

HAVOC

Well, they lost it in Iraq.

WAR

Come on, Havoc. I'll have to make a pestle for myself.

(WAR exits, followed by HAVOC)

TRYGAEUS *(coming out of his hiding-place)*

What am I going to do now? If I don't do something quickly, then he'll come back and we'll all be pounded into pieces. Oh! If only I had some help....

(The CHORUS enters)

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Come on everyone! Come on! We have to put a stop to War! (*To TRYGAEUS*) Well then, Trygaeus, we're here. What do we have to do? Give us your orders. Tell us what we have to do.

TRYGAEUS

Shut up. We've gotta be quiet. If War hears us...

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

So what are we going to do?

TRYGAEUS

We're going to rescue Peace.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

And once we have hold of her, no-one in the world will be able to take her from us.

CHORUS

Huzzah! Huzzah!

TRYGAEUS

Shut up! Or War will come back and we'll be –

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

But, Trygaeus, we're so excited at the prospect of Peace.

CHORUS

Huzzah! Huzzah!

TRYGAEUS

Be quiet, guys.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

I'm just so excited I want to dance!

CHORUS

Huzzah! Huzzah!

TRYGAEUS (*loudly*)

Stop it!

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Oi! Be quiet or War will hear us.

TRYGAEUS

Just please stop shouting and dancing.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

OK, no more dancing. We just can't seem to help it. We've got rhythm.

TRYGAEUS

But look, you're not stopping even now.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

By Zeus, I'm only tapping my right foot now. That's all.

TRYGAEUS

Look, we have to rescue Peace first. Then we can dance. Got that? Peace first, then dancing.

CHORUS

Ok.

TRYGAEUS

Right. She's behind that pile of stones. How'll we set about moving these stones?

(Enter HERMES)

HERMES

Are you still here? What are you doing?

TRYGAEUS

Nothing.

HERMES

Ok. That's fine. *(Pause as he slowly realizes)* Hang on a minute, you're not planning to rescue Peace, are you?

TRYGAEUS

No.

HERMES

Don't you know that Zeus has decreed death for anyone who is caught trying to rescue Peace?

TRYGAEUS

What? Must I really die?

HERMES

You must.

TRYGAEUS

But what if you don't tell Zeus?

HERMES

I have to. He's my boss.

TRYGAEUS

Hermes, I thought we were friends, man. Come on...

HERMES

But Zeus will strike me down if I do not shout out at the top of my voice to inform him what you are planning to do.

(HERMES goes to shout)

TRYGAEUS

Oh, no! Don't shout, I beg you, Hermes, dude...

HERMES *(thinking about it)*

Well...

TRYGAEUS

OK, if you don't tell Zeus, I promise that we'll hold the biggest festival for you. Plenty of food. Wine. We'll even invite a few girls.

HERMES

Food? Wine? Girls? Well, since you put it like that! Let's get to work and rescue Peace.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Well here we go then, farmers! And you, the cleverest of all the gods, can watch out for us.

(The CHORUS begins to lift the stones)

TRYGAEUS

And we'll offer a quick prayer for Peace.

HERMES

Silence! Let us offer our prayers as we try to rescue Peace!

TRYGAEUS

Aye, may we pass our lives in peace –

HERMES

May he who would prefer war –

TRYGAEUS

May he die a horrible death.

HERMES

And may Fortune favour us!

TRYGAEUS

To Peace!

HERMES

Very well, to Peace!

TRYGAEUS

To Hermes, to Aphrodite, to Cupid!

HERMES

But not to Ares.

CHORUS

No.

HERMES

Nor to Havoc.

CHORUS

No.

(The stones have been removed)

HERMES

Come, all strain the ropes to tear off the door. Pull, men!

CHORUS

Heave ho! Heave ho!

HERMES

Come on, pull harder. Harder!

CHORUS

Heave ho! Heave ho!

HERMES

Pull harder, harder still!

CHORUS

Heave! Heave ho, heave, ho!

TRYGAEUS

Come on! You've got to all pull together. On three.

HERMES

Come on! Pull! Pull!

TRYGAEUS

One, two, three...

TRYGAEUS

Heave ho, heave ho!

CHORUS

You two pull as well.

TRYGAEUS

I am pulling. I'm pulling so hard my hands are hurting.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Then why isn't it working?

TRYGAEUS

I know! We need to get the audience to help.

HERMES

Good plan, man. *(To audience)* Ok, are you ready to help?

TRYGAEUS

We're only going to be able to rescue Peace if all of you help.

HERMES

It's no good just sitting there doing nothing.

TRYGAEUS

Ok, on three.

HERMES

One...

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Two...

TRYGAEUS

Three!

ALL

Heave ho, heave ho!

HERMES

Harder! One!

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Two!

TRYGAEUS

Three!

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

It's not moving...

HERMES

You know, Trygaeus, I don't think the audience really wants peace.

TRYGAEUS

What? They don't want peace?

HERMES

No, I don't think they do.

TRYGAEUS *(to the audience)*

Do you want peace? *(Waits for their response)* Sorry, I can't hear you. Do you want really peace? *(Pause for audience's response)*

HERMES

One more heave. Come on, put your strength into it. One.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Two. Everyone help!

TRYGAEUS

Three!

ALL

Heave ho, heave ho!

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

One more time. Everyone who wants peace, help us!

TRYGAEUS

Everyone who yearns for peace. Pull!

HERMES

One.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Two.

TRYGAEUS

Three!

CHORUS

Heave ho, heave ho!

HERMES

There! Now we have it!

CHORUS

Heave ho, heave ho! Heave ho, heave ho!

(PEACE is drawn out of the pit)

TRYGAEUS

Oh Peace! How we have waited for you! And how beautiful you are!
How sweet your breath! What gentle fragrance is this?

HERMES

Is it then a smell like a soldier's armpits?

TRYGAEUS

No. It's, it's – the fresh beautiful smell of peace! But Hermes... why
is she so quiet?

HERMES

Wouldn't you be after the way she's been treated by you guys?

TRYGAEUS (to PEACE)

What now? Why don't you look at me?

HERMES

She really is angry. But she has lots of questions...

TRYGAEUS

What are they?

PEACE

Well, first of all I want to know what has happened to Tony Blair.

TRYGAEUS

He's gone!

PEACE

Excellent. Who is Prime Minister then?

TRYGAEUS

It's Gordon Brown.

PEACE

Oh.

TRYGAEUS

There just wasn't anyone else who wanted the job enough.

PEACE

And has he invaded any new countries?

TRYGAEUS

Not yet...

PEACE

And George Bush? How is he?

TRYGAEUS

Nobody seems to know what he's up to at the moment. He's just disappeared.

PEACE

Well, we'd better get going then.

HERMES

Bye, Trygaeus, may you enjoy your peace, and don't forget me.

TRYGAEUS (*looking around for his dung-beetle*)

Come on, beetle, home, home.

(*Exit TRYGAEUS and HERMES*)

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Well, it's just us now. And you know what I fancy doing?

CHORUS

What?

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Dancing!

CHORUS

Huzzah! Huzzah!

(singing to the tune of Disney's Heigh Ho)

We've dug dug dug dug dug dug Peace out of her hole
We've saved saved saved saved saved saved every man and soul
It ain't no trick to find Peace quick
If you dig dig dig with a shovel or a pick
In Heaven! In Heaven! In Heaven! In Heaven!
Where a million diamonds shine!

We pulled heaved heaved heaved heaved heaved Peace out of her
hole
We heaved heaved heaved heaved heaved heaved until we reached
our goal
We heaved so hard we hurt our hands
And then we stopped War's wicked plans
So at least we know what we heaved her for
We dug dug dug and a heaved heaved heaved.

Oo-argh, oo-argh
Oo-argh, oo-argh
Oo-argh!

Oo-argh, oo-argh
It's home with Peace we go!

(Whistle)

Oo-argh, oo-argh, oo-argh!

Oo-argh, oo-argh
It's home with Peace we go!

Oo-argh, oo-argh
(Whistle)

Oo-argh, oo-argh
Oo-argh, oo-argh

Oo-argh, oo-argh
Oo-argh, oo-argh

Oo-argh, oo-argh
It's home with Peace we go!

Oo-argh, oo-argh
It's home with Peace we go!

Oo-argh, oo-argh
It's home with Peace we go!

PEACE
Will you guys just shut up?

(**SCENE**:- Back on the farm)

SLAVE 1 (coming out of **TRYGAEUS**' house)

Is that you, master?

TRYGAEUS

Sure is.

SLAVE 2

What happened to you?

TRYGAEUS

I'm in agony. Flying on a dung beetle isn't at all comfortable.

SLAVE 1

So tell us about heaven! What was it like? Who did you see?

TRYGAEUS

Just one or two gods.

SLAVE 2

What were they doing up there?

TRYGAEUS

You know, god things.

SLAVE 1

And where did you get this lovely lady?

PEACE

Who *you* calling a lovely lady?

TRYGAEUS

Where? In heaven.

SLAVE 2

Well, she looks pretty hungry to me, master. Should we give her something to eat?

TRYGAEUS

No, she's a goddess. She's used to ambrosia and stuff.

SLAVE 1

What, rice pudding?

PEACE

No, the food of the gods.

SLAVE 2

Well, I'm sure we can find something to give her.

(PEACE and SLAVES 1 and 2 begin to leave)

FIRST DAUGHTER

Father! Father! We're all getting ready for the party now.

TRYGAEUS

Good.

SECOND DAUGHTER

Tell me, daddy, who was the lady who came with you?

TRYGAEUS

Why, it's Peace! We rescued her from heaven. I went through a lot of hassle getting hold of her, so be nice. *(Pause)* I wonder if, after all these years, we're ready for peace.

FIRST DAUGHTER

Ready for peas?

TRYGAEUS

No, ready for peace. P-E-A-C-E. We must be nice to her or there will be war again.

SECOND DAUGHTER

Oh no Daddy! I don't want more war.

TRYGAEUS

Well, get ready for the party then. And we must remember to be nice to Hermes as well – after all, we did promise. Right! Let's get ready to sacrifice!

(Enter VILLAIN 1 and VILLAIN 2)

VILLAIN 1

What sacrifice is this? To what god are you praying?

TRYGAEUS (to SLAVE 1)

Keep quiet! Don't tell him! *(Aloud)* Look after the roasting and keep your hands off the meat.

VILLAIN 2

Who are you roasting that meat for? Tell us.

TRYGAEUS

Mmm... smells good.

SLAVE 1

Very tasty, master!

VILLAIN 1

Well, give us some.

TRYGAEUS

It's not ready yet.

VILLAIN 2

But it looks lovely!

TRYGAEUS

No, it's raw in the middle. Anyway, mind your own business, friend!
(To **SLAVE 1**) Bring the wine.

VILLAIN 1

Did you say wine?

TRYGAEUS

Yes I did. But may I give you one piece of advice?

VILLAIN 2

And that is?

TRYGAEUS

Shut up. We're sacrificing to Peace.

VILLAIN 1 (to **VILLAIN 2**)

Peace?

VILLAIN 2 (to **VILLIAN 1**)

Peace?

VILLAINS 1 and 2

Peace!

TRYGAEUS

What? You don't want peace?

VILLAIN 1

Of course we don't want peace. We look after the temples. If there's peace men won't pay us to make sure the gods hear their prayers.

VILLAIN 2

People pay us so we can tell the future for them. So we can tell them what will happen in the war. Who'll win. Who'll lose.

VILLAIN 1

If there's no war, we don't get paid.

VILLAIN 2

And if we don't get paid, then we go hungry. Mmm... that meat looks good.

(TRYGAEUS laughs)

VILLAIN 1

What are you laughing at?

TRYGAEUS

You guys. You're idiots.

VILLAIN 2

You simple man, you trust yourselves to foxes, who are all craft, both in mind and in heart!

TRYGAEUS

You're crazy. Leave me alone.

VILLAIN 2

It has been written that Peace cannot be made, but first....

TRYGAEUS

We must remember to put salt on the meat.

VILLAIN 1 *(continuing VILLAIN 2's sentence)*

....it does not please the blessed gods that we should stop the war until the wolf unites with the sheep.

TRYGAEUS

Sheep? Wolf? Oh, peace off.

VILLAIN 2

There will not be peace until the beetle stops smelling.

VILLAIN 1

Or until the crab walks forward.

TRYGAEUS

What are you talking about?

VILLAIN 2

You will never smooth the rough spikes of the hedgehog.

TRYGAEUS

Will you never stop trying to fool us with your lies?

VILLAIN 1

Oh please. Just a little bit of the meat.

VILLAIN 2

Just a small, tiny bit.

TRYGAEUS

No! By peace, get out of here before I set my slaves on you.

VILLAIN 2

But – we're hungry!

TRYGAEUS

We cannot give you any until the wolf unites with the sheep.

VILLAINS 1 and 2

We're on our knees!

TRYGAEUS

You will never smooth the rough spikes of the hedgehog....

VILLAIN 1

We're doomed! What are we going to do?

TRYGAEUS

What do I care?

VILLAIN 2

But we want something to eat!

(VILLAINS 1 and 2 try to snatch some meat)

TRYGAEUS (to the SLAVE)

Slave! Slave! Get rid of these thieves!

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

There's nothing more pleasing than seeing a villain get his come-uppance.

(More **VILLAINS** enter)

VILLAIN 3

Trygaeus, where is Trygaeus?

TRYGAEUS

I'm cooking eggs.

VILLAIN 4

Trygaeus, let me tell you how pleased we are that you brought back Peace! Our arms business was doing very well before.

VILLAIN 3

Yes, we were making money. Selling arms to our friends.

VILLAIN 4

Then selling them to our enemies.

VILLAIN 3

Business was thriving!

VILLAIN 4

Profits were up.

VILLAINS 3 and 4

Happy times!

TRYGAEUS

Ok. Good...

VILLAIN 3

And now you have killed our business!

TRYGAEUS

Oh come on... that's not fair.

VILLAIN 4

Who is going to buy arms now there is peace?

VILLAIN 3

We're ruined. Our business is finished.

VILLAIN 4

Profits are down.

VILLAIN 3

We can't sell weapons to our friends.

VILLAIN 4

And we can't sell weapons to our enemies.

TRYGAEUS

I'll tell you what. I could take them off your hands.

VILLAIN 5

Really?

VILLAIN 6

You'd do that for us?

VILLAIN 5

That's better than nothing, isn't it?

TRYGAEUS

How much did it cost you to make them? I'll buy 'em for that! Then you'll lose nothing over it.

VILLAIN 6

What?

VILLAIN 5

You can't be serious.

(TRYGAEUS is trying to find uses for their weapons)

TRYGAEUS

What can I use these for?

VILLAIN 6

These are quality goods.

VILLAIN 5

Look! He's insulting our merchandise.

VILLAIN 6

How dare he!

VILLAIN 3

But he *is* promising us money...

VILLAIN 4

And we *are* skint.

VILLAIN 5

Come on, Trygaeus, give us our money.

TRYGAEUS

No, I've changed my mind. Take them away, I won't buy them.

ALL VILLAINS

What?

VILLAIN 6

We're ruined.

VILLAIN 3

What can we do with our weapons?

VILLAIN 4

Who will buy them?

VILLAIN 5

How are we going to make a profit?

TRYGAEUS

Oh I don't know. Why can't you just be happy there's peace?

VILLAIN 6

How can an arms dealer be happy when there's peace?

TRYGAEUS

Well, the rest of us aren't complaining.

VILLAIN 3

Let's go.

VILLAIN 5

He won't help us...

TRYGAEUS

No, wait a minute. I want to buy these spears.

VILLAIN 4

What? What do you want them for?

TRYGAEUS

Well, if I stuck them in the ground I could use them as hat stands?

VILLAIN 6

How rude!

VILLAIN 4

These are quality weapons!

VILLAIN 6

Let us go, friends.

*(The **VILLAINS** all depart. Enter **PEACE**)*

TRYGAEUS

Silence! Be quiet! Here is Peace about to appear! Let us celebrate that Peace has returned. That War has been banished!

And let's not forget to thank Hermes, who helped us get her.

LEADER OF THE CHORUS

Come on, farmers! How do we greet peace!

CHORUS

(singing to the tune of Disney's Heigh Ho)

We dug dug dug dug dug dug Peace out of her hole
We saved saved saved saved saved saved every man and soul
It ain't no trick to find Peace quick
If you dig dig dig with a shovel or a pick
In Heaven! In Heaven! In Heaven! In Heaven!
Where a million diamonds shine!